



ELTHAM DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Incorporated

No. A0016285F

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NEWSLETTER NO. 204 MAY 2012

NEXT MEETING

8-00 PM WEDNESDAY 9th MAY

SPEAKER - KEVIN PATTERSON

"CENTENARY OF THE ELTHAM - HURSTBRIDGE RAILWAY"

ELTHAM SENIOR CITIZENS' CENTRE

LIBRARY PLACE ELTHAM

(FORMERLY OLD SHIRE OFFICE DRIVEWAY)



The Old Eltham Bakery

watercolour painted for the Society by the late Audrey Cahn

HERITAGE WALKS and EXCURSIONS PROGRAM

2PM SATURDAY 5th MAY

ELTHAM GATEWAY

NORTHERN WALK

(rescheduled)

2PM SUNDAY 3rd JUNE

ST MARGARET'S CHURCH TOUR

MAY MEETING

The railway from Melbourne was extended from Heidelberg to Eltham in 1902 but it was not until 1912 that the final section of this railway to Hurstbridge was completed.

The centenary of the opening of this railway on 25th June 1912 will be celebrated with a number of events at Diamond Creek, Wattle Glen and Hurstbridge.

To mark the centenary we have arranged a presentation by Kevin Patterson, including digital slides showing photos from Kevin's own collection and that of the Nillumbik Historical Society. Over many years Kevin has researched the construction and operation of this section of railway and so he has a wealth of knowledge on the subject.



Eltham - Hurstbridge railway construction at Wattle Glen

Kevin is a life member of the Nillumbik Historical Society and has lived in Diamond Creek for 46 years. He worked in the textile, wool, meat, tanning and paper industries and enjoys studying industrial history. He has written about stone shearing sheds, wool scouring, the Warragul butter factory and Kyneton's windmill flour mill. A volunteer photographer for the Yarra Plenty Library, Kevin also writes on the library web site.

Anyone with an interest in the railway is most welcome to attend.

MAY EXCURSION – ELTHAM GATEWAY NORTHERN WALK (rescheduled)

This walk was planned as our March excursion but was cancelled due to wet weather. Instead those who came were treated to a digital slide presentation on the Eltham Gateway by Jim Connor and Russell Yeoman.

The Eltham Gateway is the name adopted for the section of Main Road Eltham leading from the roundabout at Fitzsimons Lane to the Eltham town centre. A description and background of the Gateway was included in the March Newsletter. We have not repeated that information here. Instead, we have separately included a story from the Gateway regarding the former bakery at the corner of York Street.

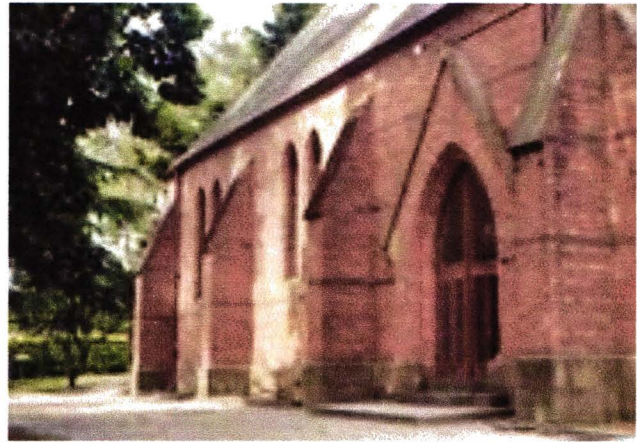
Our Eltham Local History Centre at 728 Main Road (cnr. Brougham Street, Melway ref. 21J7) is about halfway along the Gateway and so provides a convenient starting place to walk the northern part. The walk is on Saturday 5th May, starting at 2pm. The length is about 2km. There are many stops along the way so it will take about 2 ½ hours. There is no charge and the walk is open to Society members and the general public.

The walk will extend northerly as far as the War Memorial building complex. It will pass many old Eltham Township buildings and we can look at photos of how they appeared in earlier times. In Alistair Knox Park we can see modern sculptures and signs on the Heidelberg School Artists' Trail. The return walk is along the Diamond Creek path.

The Local History Centre will be open after the walk for those who want to view the displays, have a cuppa or a chat. Phone number for contact on the day is 0409 021 063.

JUNE EXCURSION – ST MARGARET’S CHURCH TOUR

At our Annual General Meeting in March Dr Geoff Sandy spoke on the history of St. Margaret’s Church, Eltham which is currently celebrating its 150th Anniversary. Geoff who is the Church’s historian and archivist has now offered to provide a guided tour of the Church, the former parsonage and the mud brick hall.



This will take place on Sunday 3rd June, commencing at 2pm. The Church is located at 79-81 Pitt Street, Eltham and the meeting point is at the front of the Church, on the western side.

The Church is included in the Victorian Heritage Register and so this tour will provide an opportunity to view and find out about one of Eltham’s most important building complexes. Geoff has produced detailed notes explaining the significance of the various internal and external features of the Church and associated buildings.

AN ELTHAM GATEWAY STORY

The following newspaper article comes from the Diamond Valley Local, Tuesday February 16th 1954. It relates to a site at the corner of York Street and Main Road, Eltham. It contained a weatherboard shop and dwelling fronting Main Road and a brick bakery at the rear fronting York Street. The shop was at various times a baker’s shop and a grocery shop. These buildings were demolished in 1979 and replaced by residential units named Bakehouse Court.

“WAS WOMAN FOUND IN WELL PUT IN IT?”

Eltham Bakehouse was the scene of a drama whose details have never been cleared. Was the woman whose body was found in the old well inside the back part of the home murdered by her husband?

Eltham bakehouse and residence now occupied by Mr Jim Arnett and family is one of the very old residences of Eltham. Mr J J Burgoyne, father of J N Burgoyne, so long known in Eltham in connection with the P.O. and store took over the bakery in 1896. At that time mystery was at its height, for the baker’s wife had been found down the well.

*Did she fall, or was she pushed?
No one knows.*

**Murder mystery
at bakery**

**HISTORY COMES
TO LIFE FOR
OLD BUILDING**

But her ghost didn't trouble the Burgoyne family, who had plenty of work on hand. The bakehouse supplied 20 large loaves of bread a day to far-scattered pioneers. Mr Burgoyne recalls his breadcarting days, and says that roads were rough. But they had metal on them.

At least that puts them a few points ahead of how they stand today. When the bakehouse was sold six years later it baked 200 loaves a day. All of this is early history stuff, now being collected by the LOCAL. It has some wonderful stories, too.

Right, or Else

Today, the quaint old house is still giving shelter and the bakehouse is equipped with an automatic "no-hands-touch-anything" machine which forms 2,000 large loaves an hour.

What happens inside that bakehouse is worth telling.

Strong and weak flours are blended to make dough.

Strong flour alone would provide a loaf burst everywhere and misshapen.

Weak flour bakes into a hard, miniature loaf.

Just the right mix has yeast food added, then a malt improver, then vitamised powdered milk, then yeast, and finally water.

The temperature of the dough is carefully regulated. If it goes over 82F. there is trouble. Ice water keeps it back in very hot weather.

Acid calcium phosphate is added to prevent sourness during hot spells. A lot of trouble isn't it? But if the dough is one degree over 82F the oven will require 15 degrees more heat.

The huge 18ft. by 15ft. Scotch oven is fired to 550F. Its firebricks glow all over.

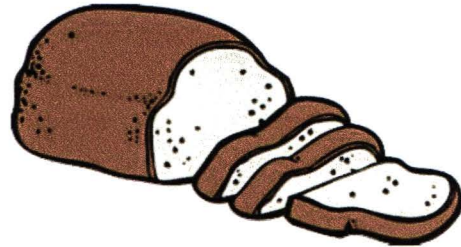
When the dough is ready a very wet cloth is scuffled over the floor of the oven.

This produces steam and temporarily cools the sole of the oven to 500F. The burn on the sole of the oven is just taken out long enough to save burning the bottoms of the loaves.

Endless Care

Loaves stay 35 to 40 minutes in the oven.

Then they are turned out on to movable wire-mesh trolleys.



Old J J Burgoyne would indeed be astonished if he could see what has been put inside his old bakehouse without changing the outside appearance.

There are some thousands of pounds' worth of the most modern machinery very much in use inside.

Master baker Jim Arnett is obviously a man who takes a pride in the quality of the bread he bakes. The trouble and care taken is a revelation to anyone who hasn't thought previously of what goes to make a loaf of bread.

Formulas are exact.

Records are kept of each bake.

On big master sheets every detail of dough temperature, outside temperature, and oven temperature are kept.

After so much care has been taken to produce good bread, it seems a pity that bread-eaters don't keep it as carefully as they keep milk, for example."

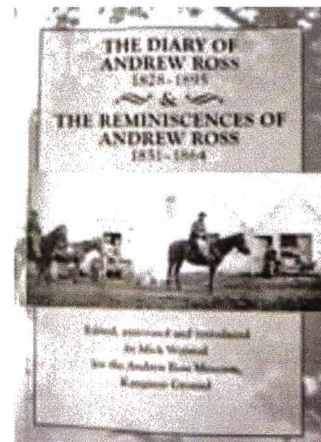
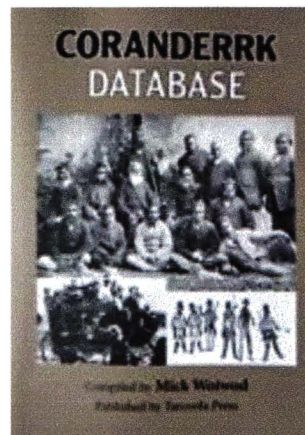
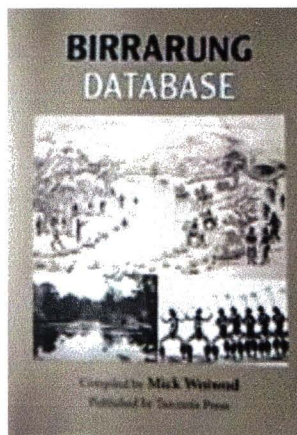
RECENT WORKS BY MICK WOIWOD

Mick Woiwod is a member of our Society and one of the driving forces behind the establishment of the Andrew Ross Museum at Kangaroo Ground.

Since the early 1990s Mick has been a prolific writer with some eighteen publications to his credit. They cover a wide range of local history and indigenous culture subjects. In some cases Mick's role is as editor or compiler, but in many cases he is the author and also researcher.

In 2011 Mick released the composite volume of the 'Diary of Andrew Ross' and the 'Reminiscences of Andrew Ross'. The reminiscences of this pioneer Kangaroo Ground teacher were originally published in the 'Evelyn Observer' newspaper in the 1880s. They have their origin in the early diary kept by Ross during his time on the Kangaroo Ground. The book includes introduction and annotation of these documents by Mick.

More recently Mick has produced two books providing an important Aboriginal culture resource. They are the 'Birrarrung Database' and the 'Coranderrk Database'. These volumes are the product of twenty five years of research and comprise a comprehensive list of sources of information on the Coranderrk Aboriginal Settlement at Healesville and the wider Aboriginal people of the Yarra Valley. Each book is accompanied by a searchable CD-ROM.



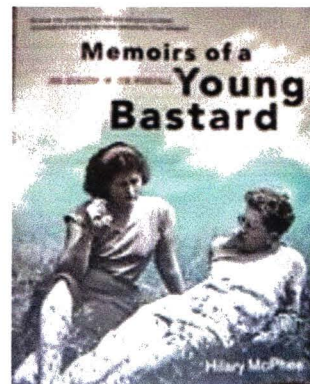
Over many years Mick's work has benefitted from the support of Bruce Nixon of Yarra Glen and his publishing company Tarcoola Press. Bruce has been a generous supporter of the Andrew Ross Museum and of this Society. Through Bruce's generosity copies of the databases have been provided free of charge to local historical societies, schools and libraries. The motivation is to make this information more accessible as it has previously been quite difficult to access.

Our Society now has copies of both databases and their accompanying CD-ROMs. Bruce has also provided the Society with a copy of Mick's Andrew Ross book. We are grateful for these generous donations.

These works now reside in the Society's library and are available by arrangement for members' reading and research.

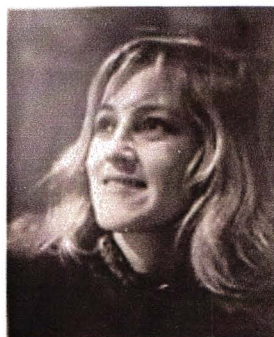
SOME INTERESTING CONNECTIONS

A number of members recently attended the Light Factory Gallery in Eltham when Hilary McPhee and Morag Fraser talked about Hilary's new book "Memoirs of a Young Bastard". This book contains memoirs from 1953-54 of noted film director Tim Burstall. The memoirs are an important documentation of the Eltham artistic and intellectual community at this time.



A copy of the book has been purchased for the Society's collection.

In a separate addition to the Society's records, Pat Baddeley has donated a number of photos by her late husband Arthur. They include large format photos of artists Hal and Joy Peck who were neighbours of Tim Burstall in Napier Crescent Montmorency. Their home was one of a significant group of mud brick houses in this street and was adjacent to the former farm dam now known as Pecks Dam.



As an addition to the Burstall memoirs, Hilary McPhee has produced a series of short biographies of people who feature in Burstall's writing. The reference to the Pecks reads as follows:

"Hal and Joy Peck (1929-2008) were Hillside neighbours of the Burstalls who built their mud brick house at 73-75 Napier Crescent. Hal was an artist who had studied at George Bell's school with Len French and Fred Williams during the late 1940s. During the period covered by the diaries he was teaching at Eltham High School and making pottery in his backyard. Joy was a painter who eventually became renowned as a naive artist. They had three children: Tony, Gina and Marcus."

SUBSCRIPTIONS

At the Annual General Meeting subscriptions for 2012-2013 were fixed at the same levels as last year and are as follows:

Single member	\$25.00
Newsletter	\$15.00
Family	\$30.00
Business organisation	\$30.00

Subscriptions are due on 1 July but earlier payment is welcomed. David would be happy to receive your money either at the May meeting or through the mail.

OFFICE BEARERS 2012 -2013

At the Annual General Meeting in March office bearers and committee members were elected for the coming year.

The full list of office bearers and committee members is as follows:

President	Jim Connor
Senior Vice President	Sue Law
Junior Vice President	Doug Orford
Treasurer/Membership Secretary	David Johns
Secretary	Russell Yeoman
Committee Members	Diana Bassett-Smith, Alison Delaney Harry Gilham, Mary Regan, Gabrielle Turner, Tony Brocksopp.

After many years as a Committee member and Treasurer/Membership Secretary Gwen Orford has retired from the Committee. We thank Gwen for her excellent contribution over the years. We welcome Tony Brocksopp as a new member of the Committee.

Gabrielle Turner retains her unofficial position as Assistance Secretary responsible for mail collection and collation and preparation of minutes. Her services have been of great assistance in administration of Society business.

MARY REGAN – LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD

At the 2012 Annual General Meeting Mary Regan was nominated and accepted as a Life Member of the Society.

Mary joined the Society in 1985 and in 1987 was nominated and accepted as a committee member, which means she has been a member for twenty-seven years and a committee member for twenty-five years.

For these twenty-seven years she has made a valuable contribution to the Society's activities for which the Society is most grateful to her.

Mary's enthusiasm and energy has been of great benefit to the Society. She has attended most of the six General Meetings and six Committee meetings each of these twenty-seven years – missing only a few when she was on one of her many overseas trips.

She has taken part in many of the Society's walks and excursions and prepared the most welcome afternoon teas at the Local History Centre following walks. Members attending General Meetings over the many years will be appreciative of her work towards preparing and serving suppers at each of these meetings.



Mary Regan (centre) with Sue Law and Gabrielle Turner actively working behind the scenes

AND ALSO

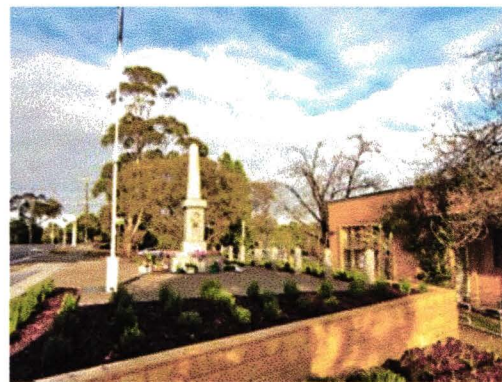
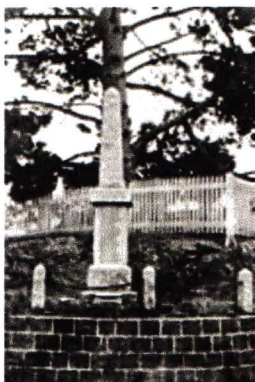
Some newer members have been assisting at recent records workshops. We try to tailor tasks to members' individual interests as much as possible. All help at these workshops is appreciated.

Coming dates for records workshops at the Local History Centre are:

Tuesdays 7.30pm - 1st May, 5th June
Mondays 9:30am - 21st May, 18th June

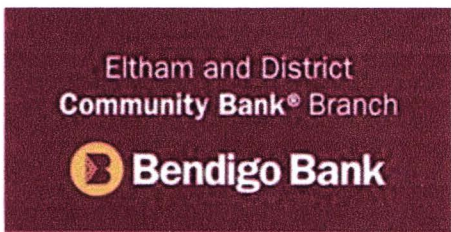
The Eltham War Memorial Obelisk has been relocated from the former Eltham RSL site to the front of the War Memorial complex of buildings at 903 Main Road. Originally this monument was located at the corner of Main Road and Bridge Street, prior to it being moved to outside the RSL. The recent relocation was required to facilitate the sale of the RSL site, as foreshadowed in an article in our May 2010 Newsletter.

The decision by Nillumbik Shire Council to allow relocation of the Obelisk to the War Memorial site is contrary to the view of this Society. In particular it is considered that the site works required to install the monument compromise the heritage integrity of the total War Memorial site.



The Eltham War Memorial Obelisk in the three different locations

*The Eltham District Historical Society
appreciates the financial support provided by the
Eltham and District branch of the Bendigo Bank*



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